

080208 Hortmer

Hello, this is addressed to Phyllis Johnson-Ball, Environmental Filing, STB finance docket #35087. Phyllis, my name is John Hortmer and I am a trustee of the Bartlet Fire Protection District. We did meet briefly in the West Chicago IL. I would like to comment on the situation that we are facing here in Bartlet. As you know, the Fire District did pass a resolution against the purchase of the EJ&E railroad by the Canadian National. In our brief meeting, we did give you a copy of that resolution. We are in the process of building a third station less than a quarter mile from a grade crossing on the EJ&E. The current proposal would seriously affect our response times from this station to the west side of the tracks where more than 5,000 residents reside. We are being told that the number of trains will increase from 5 per day to 23. I believe that is a conservative number. I believe that translates into approximately a 15% chance of a train blocking that crossing. Having the underpass or overpass at the West Bartlet Rd crossing is the very highest priority for the fire district and those 5,000 residents on the west side of the tracks. Statistics show that for every minute that passes in a life threatening emergency, 15% of your chance of surviving is lost. At 4 minutes, brain damage begins. Need I say more? Fire doubles in size every minute. There are also traffic and industrial accidents possible on the west side of the tracks. Our priority is life safety over traffic flow. Another major concern of mine is the switching of Monger Rd. This has the possibility of blocking Route 59, Monger Rd, and Sterns Rd at the same time due to the length of the trains. Route 59 is already a major North-South route for emergency vehicles. Not to mention the 45,000 vehicles that use this road daily. Monger Rd will become a North-South route for our emergency vehicles soon to be responding from the new station. I know that there will be a major push for an overpass or underpass at Sterns Rd. crossing. A few facts to be considered: only a few homes are west of the tracks. Most of the land to the west of the tracks at Sterns Rd. is a state park. Please consider life safety. I do not know of all the current technology that exists, but it seems with GPS we should be able to receive information on when and where the trains are in relation to our area. Please consider an overpass or underpass at the W. Bartlet Rd. crossing for use by all emergency personnel and the 5,000 citizens that live on the west side of the tracks. Remember, our priority is life safety. Respectfully, John Hortmer, Trustee, Bartlet Fire Protection District, 234 N Oak Ave, Bartlet IL 60103. Thank you very much for listening to my comments.

Surface Transportation Board

CN-EJ&E EIS - FD-35087

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